



O'Carolan College

Information for New Staff

1. Mission Statement

Our mission statement is based on the motto incorporated in the school crest **Saothar agus Sonas**. **Saothar** - meaning hard work. To produce hard working students who aspire to achieve their maximum potential both during school and in the world outside of school and to instil in the students a positive work ethic where effort and endeavour are highly valued qualities. **Sonas** - meaning happiness and prosperity. To develop our students as well adapted healthy members of a modern Ireland, so that they may understand that prosperity of the mind is our most valued quality.

In developing a vision for our future we have specifically identified the following aims:

- To create a safe and secure environment for learning and growth for students free from intimidation and bullying.
- That each student will achieve to the maximum of their ability in examination.
- To build a system of personal development and pastoral care that enables every student to grow in maturity, confidence and self-esteem.
- To develop a network of extra-curricular activity.
- To foster contacts with the community, business and industry.

We aim to foster and encourage every child's talents in a caring way

2. School Profile

O'Carolan College is a coeducational, multi denominational school catering for over 600 students. The school has more than doubled its enrolment in the last decade. The school provides the full range of curricular programmes including an optional Transition Year programme. Moreover there are also a wide range of extracurricular activities.

O'Carolan College embodies the principles of a positive work ethic where effort and endeavour are valued and happiness and prosperity are valuable qualities. This is stated in our mission statement. 'We aim to foster and encourage every child's talents in a caring way.'

The School promotes inclusivity and equal opportunity to quality education which is reflected in our enrolment policy and our SEN policy. Pastoral Care is the cornerstone of all practice within the school reflected in the tutor system. Our excellent guidance department supports students with academic needs and pastoral needs. We foster positive links and parental involvement with home and school. We have a successful Attendance strategy promoting school attendance. Our motivated staff are committed to achieving a centre of excellence enabling each individual to achieve their full potential.

3. Positive Learning Environment

The learning environment within O'Carolan College is a positive one with a strong focus on the promotion of positive behaviour rather than a punishment of poor behaviour.

There is an ethos of praising students and acknowledging achievements where possible including daily assemblies and announcements. We also hold award ceremonies and organise regular contact procedures with parents to positively reinforce students e.g. via a dedicated diary system. Staff take the opportunity to recognise and acknowledge good behaviour.

'Students achievements are affirmed and highlighted as part of the daily life of the school' -O'Carolan College MLL Inspection Report 2014

Central to the learning environment is a culture of high expectations for all our students. There is regular monitoring of students' progress via examination and reporting. Student results are reviewed by teaching teams to ensure students are achieving their potential and to provide supports for those students who need them.

'The atmosphere in the school is supportive and positive; student leadership is facilitated and supported'- O'Carolan College MLL Inspection Report 2014

Thus:

- Teacher-student and student-student interactions are respectful
- The students' efforts are affirmed
- The teacher has high and realistic expectations of the students
- Students' contributions and questions are welcomed

- *School Self Evaluation Guidelines for Post Primary Schools.*

4. Teaching and Learning

Excellent Teaching and Learning are central to the philosophy of O'Carolan College. The staff of O'Carolan College are expected to show knowledge and experience of various active pedagogic strategies.

Teachers are expected to develop the following teaching approaches in their lessons:

- The lesson is guided by syllabus-linked learning outcomes which are shared with the students
 - The lesson is well structured (introduction, development, conclusion-review)
 - A range of the following teaching approaches is used:
 - 1) Teacher and student questioning
 - 2) Guided discussion
 - 3) Collaborative and co-operative learning
 - 4) Investigative approaches to learning
 - 5) Higher-order thinking and problem solving
 - 6) Encouragement of the student's personal and creative response to the subject
 - 7) Developmentally appropriate reference to requirements for state examinations
- *School Self Evaluation Guidelines for Post Primary Schools.*

Teachers encourage students to engage in learning, thus teachers will ensure that:

- Students work purposefully during the lesson
 - Students are interested in their learning
 - All students participate in the lesson
 - Students are properly challenged in their learning
 - There is progression in the students' learning
 - Students achieve the learning outcome(s) of the lesson
- *School Self Evaluation Guidelines for Post Primary Schools.*

Differentiation is key in enabling all students to access the curriculum and achieve their full potential. Thus teachers will ensure that:

- Teacher questioning is clear, includes lower and higher-order questions and stimulates response from students
 - Effective use is made of opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills
 - Attention is given to consolidation of students' learning
 - Constructive feedback is provided to students on their learning, and teaching and learning is amended in the light of that feedback
- *School Self Evaluation Guidelines for Post Primary Schools.*

5. Effective Use of ICT to complement learning

ICT is essential in teaching and learning in the 21st century. LMETB schools are pioneers in ICT in education with many of our schools employing the use of iPads, surface pros and other devices in teaching and learning.

Teachers are expected to be knowledgeable and show evidence of the use of ICT in the classroom and have knowledge and use of various digital learning resources such

as PowerPoint, Digital Whiteboards, Data Projectors, USBs, assistive technologies etc. Such resources are used by teachers and students to support students' learning.

6. Collaborative Environment

Subject Teams

There are many forums whereby teachers work together on Teaching and Learning issues. Teachers meet regularly both formally and informally and work closely with members of their subject teams. Subject teams share resources readily. Moreover there is a common digital folder where teachers upload and share various worksheets, teaching strategies and ideas with colleagues. All teachers are expected to share this collaborative philosophy.

Team teaching

O'Carolan College recognises the benefits of team teaching. Teachers may be involved in team teaching. This is where both teachers are actively involved in teaching content and skills to students. Both teachers are actively involved in the lessons and plan together lesson outcomes, activities and resources. Teachers are expected to be advocates of team teaching.

Special Needs Assistants

Teachers are expected to be strong advocates of the practice of SNAs working alongside students in their classrooms. Teachers are expected to support SNAs in their practice. Special Needs Assistants are present in class to support identified students promoting their engagement with the lesson material and ensuring they feel more included and involved in the class.

7. Assessment for Learning

O'Carolan College has Assessment for Learning as the foundation of assessment processes within the school. Assessment for Learning practices include:

- Sharing the learning objective with students
- Variety of questioning strategies
- Self and peer assessment
- Formal frames or formulas to be followed to ensure successful tasks
- Comment only marking
- Personalised comments on reports home
- Guideline to students on corrected work and exams of how to improve and progress.
- Criteria for success

Teachers are expected to be strong advocates of Assessment for Learning and its educational benefits.

8. Daily Assembly

Daily assemblies take place in O'Carolan College. These morning assemblies are an opportunity for the school to develop a sense of community and to celebrate success and identify issues for the day. Teachers attend the daily assembly.

9. Pastoral Care

Pastoral Care is the cornerstone of all practice within the school reflected in the tutor system. Ensuring that our students are happy and feel secure is of crucial importance. Class teachers are appointed to care for a class/tutor group with particular attention to their health, welfare and educational attainment. The Tutor generally teaches their group a subject and SPHE. The class is named after them as Gaeilge. The Tutor develops a close relationship with their class by educating themselves on their student's backgrounds, learning needs and any other relevant information. The Tutor is the first person that home will contact with any concerns or issues pertaining to their child. All teachers are expected to take on the tutor role if called upon.

There is a School Diary which facilitates home-school liaison with regard to a number of areas including pastoral care. This diary records punctuality, absences, positive and negative behaviour. Tutors check this diary weekly as it informs them of the progress of the students in their tutor group.

10. Extra and Co-Curricular Activities

The benefits of extra and co-curricular activities cannot be underestimated. They give students the opportunity to work together as a team with their teacher which help develop positive pupil-teacher relationships. Further to this it gives students who may not shine as brightly in the academic environment the opportunity to succeed. Teachers readily involve themselves in a wide variety of such activities.

The formal curriculum is complemented by a wide range of extra-curricular sporting and cultural activities. –O'Carolan College MLL Inspection Report 2014

11. Staff Professionalism

Teachers are role models for children and therefore the staff of O'Carolan College are expected to exhibit the highest standards of professionalism at all times. All staff should be fully familiar with the Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers which has been published by the Teaching Council of Ireland. There is a strict professional code of dress for the staff of O'Carolan College.

12. Mobile Phones

O'Carolan College has a progressive mobile phone policy. Students are encouraged to use phones as an educational device in class where relevant. Moreover they are allowed to use phones at break and lunch times for personal use. However no student or member of staff may be photographed or filmed without permission.

13. Social Networking Sites

If any members of staff have their own social networking sites it is important that these sites would remain private and cannot be accessed at any stage by parents or students of O'Carolan College.

14. Absence

Staff who are unavailable for work due to illness or extra-curricular activities should provide cover work for their classes and let the school know as soon as possible that they will not be in. Work can be emailed to the school.

15. Final Point

The present staff of O'Carolan College are team players. They are also dynamic, energetic, cooperative, flexible, progressive and innovative. In this era of educational change prospective staff are expected to be all of the above, have a passion for teaching and learning and make a big contribution to the excellent reputation of O'Carolan College.